



a New Day for Federal Service

**Fostering Fair Employment
Opportunities for Applicants
Who Are Unemployed or Facing
Financial Difficulty Through No
Fault of Their Own**

What hiring officials need to know

A vertical strip of the American flag is visible on the left side of the slide, showing the stars and stripes.

The Unemployed and Persons with Financial Difficulties

Presidential Memorandum – January 31, 2014

- Agencies shall not make unfavorable decisions related to hiring based on whether:
 - An applicant is or was unemployed; or
 - An applicant or employee has experienced or is experiencing financial difficulties through no fault of his/her own and is making good-faith efforts to resolve them.

A vertical strip of the American flag is visible on the left side of the slide, showing the stars and stripes.

What does this mean?

- Agencies may consider an applicant's employment history in order to help determine whether the applicant is qualified, and the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities the applicant possesses;
- Agencies may consider misconduct which may have prompted periods of unemployment, but not unemployment in general; and
- Agencies may consider the reasons for a period of unemployment, if the reasons are related to neglect of duties or misconduct; but

A vertical strip of an American flag is visible on the left side of the slide, showing the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes.

What does this mean? (Cont'd)

- Unemployment per se is not relevant to the determinations an agency needs to make relating to hiring.
- When reviewing candidates' applications and making selection decisions, do not focus upon periods of unemployment per se. Instead, consider each candidate's complete application and what it tells you about his or her competencies.
- Financial difficulties through no fault of the applicant, where good faith efforts are made to meet obligations, typically should not be relevant in selection decisions.

A vertical strip of the American flag is visible on the left side of the slide, showing the stars and stripes.

How can hiring officials help?

Hiring managers can help by:

- Designing recruitment strategies that cast a broad net and do not inadvertently exclude the unemployed; and
- Designing assessment strategies that assess competencies through a variety of measures.

A vertical strip of the American flag is visible on the left side of the slide, showing the stars and stripes.

Conducting Interviews

- You CAN ask candidates about their:
 - Specific roles and responsibilities at past jobs
 - Likes and dislikes pertaining to their work
 - Job knowledge and other job-related experiences
- Additional topics on which an interviewer might wish to focus:
 - What are the aspects of the position in question that interest the candidate?

A vertical strip of the American flag is visible on the left side of the slide, showing the stars and stripes.

Conducting Interviews (cont'd)

- How has the candidate's background – whatever it is – prepared the candidate to perform the duties of the job?
- What skills can the candidate bring to bear on the problems that will be encountered in the job?
- How have the candidate's educational or life experiences helped shape his or her competencies?